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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [GR](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA OFFERS EXPANDED CBM'S TO GREECE ON NAME  
DISPUTE

REF: A. SKOPJE 21 & PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. EMBASSY FAX TO EUR/SCE 1/22/07

[1](#)C. SKOPJE 32

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#### SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) During bilateral talks on the name issue in Ohrid January 21, Macedonia offered Greece an expanded set of confidence-building measures (CBMs), including a joint committee to review and update historical textbooks; proposed high-level and working-level meetings and agreements on a range of issues, including double taxation, science and technology, and cross-border cooperation; and a "joint declaration of friendship and good-neighborliness," in which both sides would reaffirm their commitment to the 1995 Interim Accord and Macedonia would reiterate its earlier renunciation of territorial claims and support for Greece's territorial integrity. The Greek side has not yet officially responded to the offer, but its public reaction has not been encouraging. We view the Macedonian offer as a constructive move to improve the bilateral atmosphere by demonstrating practical goodwill. Macedonia also hopes to gain greater tactical flexibility in the name talks with Greece as the NATO summit in Bucharest approaches. End summary.

#### OFFER OF EXPANDED CBM'S IN THE CONTEXT OF NAME TALKS

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[1](#)2. (SBU) FM Milososki briefed selected ambassadors (U.S., UK, Netherlands, Spain, France, Slovenia) and an EUSR representative January 21 on Macedonia's proposal to Greece to expand confidence-building measures in the context of the name dispute. Noting that the proposal had been presented to Greece's name negotiator during the bilateral meeting taking place the same day in Ohrid under the auspices of UN Special Negotiator Nimetz (ref A), Milososki briefly ran through the highlights of the three-part proposal, which was provided to each ambassador as a non-paper (ref B). Milososki underscored that the proposal had not yet been commented on by the Greek side, but said Nimetz would brief PM Gruevski and President Crvenkovski the evening of January 21 on any progress in the name discussions in Ohrid, and Milososki

expected the Greek side to have reacted to the CBM proposals by then. Local press on January 22 reported that Greek negotiator Vassilakis, responding to the CBM proposal, had hewn to the Athens line of insisting on progress on the name dispute before tackling CBMs. Local press also reported that Nimetz was satisfied with the outcome of the Ohrid round of talks, characterizing it as "one of the best so far."

#### JOINT COMMITTEE TO REVIEW & UPDATE HISTORICAL TEXTS

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13. (U) The proposal envisions setting up a Greek-Macedonian Joint Committee on Education and History, comprised of academics and history teachers, to review primary and secondary education history textbooks in use, as well as texts used in the military academies of both countries. A representative appointed by Ambassador Nimetz, as well as one from the Thessaloniki-based NGO Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, would observe the proceedings.

14. (U) The Ministers of Education of both countries would convene a conference to discuss the Joint Committee's recommendations, after which the two sides would produce a joint report. Upon endorsing the joint report, the Greek and Macedonian governments would call upon relevant educational institutions to update the textbooks and incorporate curriculum materials based on the joint report.

15. (SBU) Comment: This proposal would respond to perennial Greek complaints, which we have never been able to confirm, that Macedonian textbooks promote an irredentist agenda. Our own reviews of Macedonian textbooks, including those cited in Greek complaints, have uncovered no evidence of irredentist texts or illustrations, either in primary or high school material, or in military academy texts. End comment.

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#### FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL FOR ADVANCING BILATERAL RELATIONS

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16. (SBU) The second part of the proposal consists of a two-stage "framework" for advancing bilateral relations. In stage one, to be conducted between January and April 2008, the two sides would adopt a "Declaration of Friendship, Good Neighborliness, and Cooperation;" sign a Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty, the text of which already has been coordinated, according to the MFA; and open an additional border crossing to further facilitate trade and tourism.

17. (SBU) Stage two of the "framework" would consist of additional activities "to be realized in the course of the year." Those would include bilateral presidential and prime ministerial summits once every two years, foreign ministerial bilats annually, and annual meetings of the presidents of parliament and the respective foreign affairs committee members. In addition, the two sides would agree on additional ministerial and sub-ministerial level meetings across a range of issues, including justice, environment, and tourism. They also would aim to conclude agreements on local border traffic, science and technology exchanges, health, and other issues. To further promote regional cooperation, the "framework" includes a proposal for annual trilateral meetings of the MFAs of Macedonia, Greece, and Albania.

#### MACEDONIA REITERATES "NO TERRITORIAL CLAIMS"

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18. (SBU) The key substantive innovation in the package of CBM's is a proposed "Declaration of Friendship, Good-Neighborliness, and Cooperation Between the Hellenic Republic and Macedonia" (details of which leaked to the press shortly after the Foreign Minister's briefing.) In addition to both sides reaffirming their intent to abide by the terms of the 1995 Interim Accord, Macedonia would reiterate its

earlier pledge, enshrined in its Constitution, that "it does not have and will never have any claims to any territory outside its internationally-recognized borders and in this context fully supports the territorial integrity of the Hellenic Republic." The Declaration also would incorporate references to the activities envisioned under the "framework proposal for advancing bilateral relations," as described above. In addition, it would mandate the setting up of a joint Greece-Macedonia fund, which would be used to finance projects of mutual interest, including in the fields of youth development, cross-border cooperation, and science and technological development.

COMMENT

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19. (SBU) Despite Greek resistance to discussing CBMs in the absence of progress on the substance of the name dispute, the Macedonian side is pressing ahead with this three-part initiative to attempt to improve the bilateral atmosphere, as well as to offset perceptions that its adherence to the "dual name" proposal on the name (ref A) is the cause for the current inertia in the name discussions. The GOM initiative, which contains several constructive proposals, is designed to give the Macedonians more substance for negotiating with the Greeks,, and thus more flexibility. It also is designed to demonstrate goodwill toward its southern neighbor in the lead-up to the NATO summit in April, when Macedonia hopes to avoid a potential Greek veto of a prospective NATO membership invitation if the two sides are unable to resolve the name issue by then (ref C).

MILOVANOVIC